

of the deceased the form of persuasion technically known as *meleket*. This consists of putting a noose round her neck, and drawing it tighter and tighter till she consents to give up her late husband's money. After that the murderer and his friends have nothing further to do for the present, but to remain quietly in the house and allow events to take their usual course.

Meantime the chiefs assemble in the council-house, and the Cere-louci droning notes of the triton-shell, which answers the purpose monies of a tocsin, summon the whole population to arms. The warriors before the muster, and surrounding the house where the conspirators are assassinated they shower spears and stones at it, as if to inflict condign recognized punishment on the assassins. But this is a mere blind, a sham, a room of his legal fiction, intended perhaps to throw dust in the eyes of the victim. ghost and make him think that his death is being avenged. In point of fact the warriors take good care to direct their missiles at the roof or walls of the house, for if they threw them at the windows they might perhaps hurt the murderer. After this formality has been satisfactorily performed, the regicide steps out of the house and engages in the genial task of paying the death duties to the various chiefs assembled. When he has observed this indispensable ceremony, the law is satisfied: all constitutional forms have been carried out: the assassin is now the legitimate successor of his victim and reigns in his stead without any further trouble.

But if he has omitted to massacre his predecessor and has But the allowed him to die a natural death, he suffers for his negligence by being compelled to observe a long series of complicated and irksome formalities before he can make good his succession in the to observe eyes of the law. For in that case the title of chief has to be formally withdrawn from the dead man and conferred on his successor by a curious ceremony, which includes the presentation of a coconut more com- and a taro plant to the new chief. Moreover, at first he may not enter the chiefs house, but has to be shut up in a tiny hut for thirty or forty days during all the time of mourning, and even when that is murdered over he may not come out till he has received and paid for a

human
head brought him by the people of a friendly state. After
that he
still may not go to the sea-shore until more formalities have
been fully
observed. These comprise a very, costly fishing expedition,
which is
conducted by the inhabitants of another district and lasts for
weeks.
At the end of it a net full of fish is brought to the chiefs
house, and
the people of the neighbouring communities are summoned
by the
blast of trumpets. As soon as the stranger fishermen
have been
publicly paid for their services, a relative of the new chief
steps
across the net and solemnly splits a coco-nut in two with
an old-
fashioned knife made of a Tridacna shell, while at the same
time he
bans all the evils that might befall his kinsman. Then,
without
looking at the nut, he throws the pieces on the ground, and
if they